SAVANT RECORDS INC.

BRANDON SANDERS

LASTING IMPRESSION

STACY DILLARD
WARREN WOLF
ERIC SCOTT REED
ERIC WHEELER

WITH SPECIAL GUEST
JAZZMEIA HORN

SAVANT RECORDS INC.

1. 8/4 BEAT 7:25
(Bobby Hutcherson) (EMI Unart Catalog) BMI

2. LASTING IMPRESSION 4:23
(Brandon Sanders) (TheSwingman 213 / Bluejay Eleven Music) ASCAP

3. OUR LOVE IS HERE TO STAY 6:21
(George Gershwin / Ira Gershwin) (Brian's Songs / Frankie G. Songs / Go Out Laughing Music / Nokawi Music) ASCAP

4. SHADOBOXING 6:19
(Eric Scott Reed) (Soldier's Hymn Music) ASCAP

5. TALES OF MISSISSIPPI 4:45
(Brandon Sanders) (TheSwingman 213 / Bluejay Eleven Music) ASCAP

6. SOUL EYES 5:59
(Mal Waldron) (Tillmon Music Co.) BMI

7. NO BS FOR B.S. 5:52
(Eric Scott Reed) (Soldier's Hymn Music) ASCAP

8. UNTIL YOU COME BACK TO ME (THAT'S WHAT I'M GONNA DO) 4:20
(Stevie Wonder / Clarence Paul / Morris Broadnax) (Black Bull Music / Joebete Music / Sawandi Music / Stone Agate Music) ASCAP

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Brandon Sanders is about as far as you can get from a prodigy. He learned from a young age that early success is never a reliable indicator of longevity, whether in one's career or in one's life. As a walk-on basketball player at the University of Kansas, he saw many a college hoops phenom's dreams derailed by injury or lack of dedication. Growing up on the infamous streets of Compton, he witnessed firsthand the kind of "live fast, die young" tragedies that have been documented by fellow Centennial High School alumni Dr. Dre, DJ Quik, and Kendrick Lamar.

Sanders was 25 years old before he ever picked up a pair of drumsticks, an age by which most musicians have already notched years of study, gigging, and recording. More than quarter century passed before he released his debut album, *Compton's Finest* on Savant Records in 2023 at age 52.

With his spirited third album, *Lasting Impression*, it's clear that the Kansas City-born, Compton-raised, NYC-based drummer is focused on the long term. Well past the point where he'd be out to prove himself as the next big thing, he has instead focused on his legacy, crafting music that leaves an indelible impact while drawing on the experiences and lessons he's learned along the way.

"I was never one of the greatest ballplayers coming out of L.A., but I knew what it takes to win," Sanders says. "It's the same thing with music. I may not be the next Tony Williams, but I know how to make the music feel good. I come from the party vibe, so I try to make sure that people are snapping their fingers and bobbing their heads. Even people who ordinarily don't listen to jazz, they feel it."

Sanders comes by those instincts naturally, having been raised in a musical family. His mother, father, and stepfather all played musical instruments. His grandmother, Ernestine Parker – immortalized by "Miss Ernestine," the crowd-pleasing opener from his second album, *The Tables Will Turn* (Savant SCD 2219) – owned the Kansas City nightclub Casablanca. She regaled her grandson with memories and photos of the jazz greats she hosted: Lou Donaldson, Stanley Turrentine, Grant Green, and countless others.

Sanders and his mother moved from K.C. to Los Angeles when he was 22 months old, eventually settling in the Compton neighborhood, a period of his life recalled in the title of *Compton's Finest* (SCD 2211). He showed hints of his future percussive gifts by beatboxing and then spinning records as a DJ. "Growing up in Compton," he recalls, "I got into music as a way to try to survive. I was the guy who had the two turntables and a mixer."

He returned to his home state to attend the University of Kansas, where he studied jazz history with Dick Wright, also a longtime radio host on KANU. Wright encouraged Sanders' lifelong obsession with collecting records, introducing him to the classics of the Blue Note and Prestige catalogs. After graduating from KU and searching for his next move, Sanders found himself drawn to a set of drums at the church he attended. Two years later, he'd honed his skills enough to further his studies in Boston.

If that seems like a remarkably fast trajectory, much can be explained by the habits that he'd forged on the court. "It all takes the same kind of discipline," he says. "Whether I was playing basketball or playing the drums, it meant getting up at 5 or 6 o'clock and practicing all day. I still feel like I'm catching up with the great drummers who have been doing this all their lives—Lewis Nash or Willie Jones or Kenny Washington."

Sanders more than holds his own with the all-star cast he's assembled for this date. Prior to becoming one of the music's

most respected mallet players, Warren Wolf was one of Sanders' peers at Berklee and has remained among the drummer's strongest supporters, playing on all three of his albums. Sanders credits Wolf with pushing him to challenge himself on stage and in the studio, and he chose Bobby Hutcherson's "8/4 Beat" to open the new album as a showcase for the vibraphonist, who responds with a lively, cascading solo.

Sanders first connected with Jazzmeia Horn, who he calls his "little big sister," via Facebook in the days before she established herself as one of the leading jazz voices of her generation. She joined the band for a pair of tracks on *Compton's Finest* and does the same here, with an intimate "Our Love Is Here to Stay" and a soulful rendition of the Stevie Wonder classic "Until You Come Back to Me (That's What I'm Gonna Do)." Sanders reconfigured the band into a groove-centric quartet to close out the album, with Wolf alongside rising star pianist Tyler Bullock and bassist Ameen Saleem, a longtime collaborator of the late, legendary Roy Hargrove.

Pianist Eric Scott Reed, who was suggested by producer Willie Jones III for the session as an ideal sparring partner for Sanders, contributes two pieces: the sly "Shadoboxing," propped up by Eric Wheeler's swaggering bass, and "No BS for B.S.," whose cleverly worded title gives a tip of the hat to leader Sanders. Saxophonist Stacy Dillard delves deep into the pain and longing of "Soul Eyes," the Mal Waldron classic so memorably performed by John Coltrane.

Sanders contributed two originals, the buoyant title track and "Tales of Mississippi," a heartfelt tribute to the people that the drummer has met in the state, a counterbalance to the many songs recounting the tragedies that have befallen them over the years.

It may have taken Sanders longer than most to reach this point in his career, but his first decades were far from wasted. They were spent garnering knowledge and experience that now enrich and pour forth from his music, ensuring that he leaves a *Lasting Impression*.

– Shaun Brady
Philadelphia, June 2025

Jazzmeia Horn

A note from Brandon Sanders

First of all I would like to thank God. I must also thank my family for their support and love throughout my life. I'd also like to thank Barney Fields for his wisdom and expertise. He has given me the opportunity to record and tell my story through music and for that I am grateful to him. Music is a beautiful thing. Thanks to all who have helped me make it, appreciate it and share it.

– Brandon Sanders

Produced by **Willie Jones III**
Executive Producer: **Barney Fields**
Engineered and Mixed by **Aaron Nevezie**
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on March 30 & May 22, 2025
Mastered by **David Darlington** at Bass Hit Recording
1963 Chevrolet Impala courtesy of **Eddie Wells**
Photography by **Jaimie Milner**
Jazzmeia Horn photo by **Adrien H. Tillmann**
Graphic Design by **İrem Ela Yildizeli**

Jazzmeia Horn appears courtesy of
Empress Legacy Records
Eric Scott Reed is a Yamaha Pianos Artist and
appears courtesy of Smoke Sessions Records

BRANDON SANDERS – DRUMS
STACY DILLARD – TENOR SAXOPHONE (TRACKS 1-3 & 5-7)
WARREN WOLF – VIBES (TRACKS 1-3, 5, 7 & 8)
ERIC SCOTT REED – PIANO (TRACKS 1-7)
ERIC WHEELER – BASS (TRACKS 1-7)
JAZZMEIA HORN – VOCAL (TRACKS 3 AND 8)
AMEEN SALEEM – BASS (TRACK 8)
TYLER BULLOCK – PIANO (TRACK 8)

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